

Planning & Real Estate Consultants

Memorandum

To: Master Plan Steering Committee

From: Keenan Hughes, AICP, PP
Spach Trahan, AICP, PP

Date: June 22, 2023

Re: Summary of Public Responses to Questions at Master Plan Kick-Off Meeting

This memorandum provides a summary of the public responses to questions posed at the Master Plan Kick-Off Meeting on June 14, 2023. Responses are based on facilitator notes from eight in-person group discussions involving approximately 60 attendees, as well as 22 completed Google Form responses from virtual attendees on Zoom.¹

1. *What are Teaneck's greatest assets and strengths?*

Recurring answers included the following:

- Tradition of diversity, inclusion, and activism on race, cultures, and religions
- Strong community ties, not transient
- Suburban feel
- Sidewalks
- Tree-lined streets
- Quiet
- Proximity to NYC
- Bus transportation options
- Access to major highways
- Institutions: schools, library
- Recreation and parks systems, green space
- Rodda Center programming

Other non-recurring answers included:

- Healthcare, both access to/and as an employer
- Teaneck International Film Festival (TIFF)
- Fairleigh Dickinson University

¹ The Google Form was only open and accepting responses during the Kick-Off Meeting. A comprehensive community-wide survey on the Master Plan will be conducted at a later date.

2. *What aspects of life in Teaneck need improvement? What would you like to see change? What might be the biggest challenges in the next 5-10 years?*

Responses ranged across many topic areas, summarized as follows:

- Revitalize the commercial areas (Cedar Lane, Degraw Avenue, The Plaza, and Teaneck Road all mentioned)
 - o Aesthetics
 - o Types of business offerings (quality, type - cafes, supermarkets, restaurants, clothing stores, arts/culture/entertainment venues, etc.)
 - o More parking needed
 - Angled vs. parallel parking
 - o Need for place-making to avoid being a “pass-through” town
 - o Attract all types of shoppers (young people, people in other towns, FDU students, etc.)
- Managing traffic congestion and public transit crowding
 - o Idea: Shuttle to rail stations
 - o Improve transportation within Twp., to other locations in NJ, and commuting to NYC
 - o Improve traffic safety
 - o Add traffic lights (The Plaza, etc.)
- Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets
 - o Add bicycle lanes
 - o Maintain sidewalks
 - o Idea: Close streets for pedestrians
- Keep connectivity throughout Teaneck
- Infrastructure improvements (road surface quality, overpasses)
- High-rise/multifamily apartments - criticisms
 - o Low-rise apartments preferred
 - o Design guidelines/aesthetic alignment with existing built environment
 - o Need proper setbacks
 - o Too many multifamily dwellings, creating an urban environment
 - o Too much developer control
 - o Concern over impacts on infrastructure
 - o Concern over misuse of redevelopment process
- Increase/improve housing options
 - o Allow two-family zoning, accessory dwelling units on single-family lots
 - o More affordable options

- Add more multifamily housing and missing-middle housing for young people, young families, and seniors
- Options for people with disabilities
- Parks and recreation improvements
 - Better utilize Argonne Park
 - Add pickleball courts
 - Make parks more user-friendly (benches, lighting, shade)
- Better incorporate Fairleigh Dickinson University into the community
 - Attract students and staff to business districts
- Improve the relationship between Holy Name Medical Center and the community
- Improved programming for seniors
- Improve schools
- Property rights/ eminent domain concerns
- Address drainage and flooding concerns
- Improve communication over development and planning process

3. What is one key topic that the Master Plan must address?

Key topics to be addressed can be summarized in two main categories: residential and commercial.

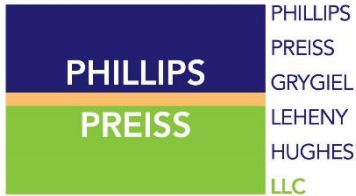
Residential:

- Providing housing options for the next generation
- Maintain the quality of life and community character (low-density residential)
- Establish design standards for new development
 - Height, building materials, architectural style, etc.
- Ensure infrastructure is adequate/has capacity to support new development, especially residential development (infrastructure = roads/traffic, utilities, and municipal services)

Commercial:

- Incentivize commercial development and business attraction/success
- Improve walkability from residential areas to business districts
- Parking to support commercial districts

4. Who must be included in the Master Planning process? What groups will be underrepresented without intentional outreach? (e.g., renters, business owners, immigrants, age groups, community organizations, etc.)



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Respondents believed the following groups should be targeted for additional outreach efforts:

- Families with children
- Small business owners
- Northeast quadrant of town (Northeast Block Association)
- Youth (under 18) and young adults
- Renters
- Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Hispanic community
- People who work in Teaneck but are not residents
- People with disabilities
- Faith communities (e.g., Muslim community)
- Prospective homebuyers/real estate agents or brokers
- Educational institutions
- Seniors
- People who do not use technology
- Lower-income residents

Respondents provided some preliminary ideas for outreach locations or methods:

- PTA meetings
- Youth sports leagues
- Community events
- Houses of worship
- Block associations
- Rental communities
- Fliers in supermarkets to reach people that do not use technology